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Agenda item 18 (*i*)

Resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 27 July 2016

[*on a proposal considered in plenary meeting (E/2016/L.28)*]

2016/27. Strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 66/288 of 27 July 2012, in which the Assembly endorsed the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want", in which Heads of State and Government recognized the importance of space technology-based data, in situ monitoring and reliable geospatial information for sustainable development policymaking, programming and project operations,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, in which the Assembly adopted the document entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", in which was recognized the need for new data acquisition and integration approaches to improve the availability, quality, timeliness and disaggregation of data to support the implementation of the new development agenda at all levels, benefiting from the contribution to be made by a wide range of data, including earth observation and geospatial information, while ensuring national ownership in supporting and tracking progress,

Bearing in mind that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030[1] and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway[2] unequivocally call for globally coordinated actions in new data acquisition and integration approaches and in employing geospatial information for sustainable development and disaster risk reduction, and to strengthen the availability and accessibility of geospatial data platforms,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 69/266 of 26 February 2015, entitled "A global geodetic reference frame for sustainable development", in which the Assembly called for greater multilateral cooperation on geodesy, including the open sharing of geospatial data, further capacity-building in developing countries, the creation of international standards and conventions, and contributions to the global reference frame and regional densifications through relevant national mechanisms and intergovernmental cooperation,

[1] General Assembly resolution 69/283, annex II.
[2] General Assembly resolution 69/15, annex.

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Recalling also Economic and Social Council resolution 2011/24 of 27 July 2011, by which the Council established the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management to provide a forum for coordination and dialogue among Member States and between Member States and relevant international organizations,

Recalling further that, in establishing the Committee of Experts, in accordance with the terms of reference contained in the annex to its resolution 2011/24, the Council requested the Committee to present to it in 2016 a comprehensive review of all aspects of the Committee's work and operations, in order to allow Member States to assess its effectiveness,

Noting decision 5/113, adopted on 7 August 2015 by the Committee of Experts at its fifth session,[3] in which the Committee recommended that the Council consider strengthening the mandate of the Committee in order to strengthen its interaction with other subsidiary bodies of the Council, in particular the Statistical Commission, and agreed that the role of the Committee, as an assembly of authoritative national government institutions in the field of geospatial information, was increasingly important in effectively coordinating the field of geospatial information management in the broader United Nations system,

Noting also the establishment of a strong and streamlined regional infrastructure composed of five regional technical geospatial information committees[4] that report to the Committee of Experts and bring important regional perspectives to the consideration of global geospatial issues,

Noting further the recommendations emanating from the Twentieth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific,[5] the second plenary meeting of the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas and the first plenary meeting of the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa, which supported the mandate of the Committee of Experts to enhance its role and increase its contribution to the work of the United Nations, agreed that the formal United Nations regional cartographic conference format was no longer a necessary requirement and recommended that the Council consider removing the conferences from the United Nations calendar of conferences and meetings, with their mandates and obligations assumed by the Committee at the global level, and their technical and substantive activities at the regional and national levels assumed by the regional technical committees of the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management,

1. *Welcomes* the report of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management on the review of its work;[6]

2. *Acknowledges* the considerable achievements and progress made by the Committee of Experts in the area of global geospatial information management over the past five years and its contribution to the strengthening of geospatial information management capacities and utilization in developing countries;

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[3] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2015, Supplement No. 26* (E/2015/46), chap. I, sect. B.

[4] Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Asia and the Pacific; Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas; Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa; Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Arab States; and Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Europe.

[5] See E/CONF.104/9.

[6] E/2016/47.

3. *Welcomes* the efforts of the Committee of Experts to streamline the work of the four current subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council in the field of geospatial information management, namely the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conferences for the Americas and for Asia and the Pacific, respectively, and the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names and its related United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names;

4. *Recognizes* that the Committee of Experts has operated effectively and in line with the mandate given by the Council over the past five years, producing tangible outputs, and that the Committee is well placed to continue to contribute to the work of the United Nations, especially in the context of efforts to assist Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[7] the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030,[1] the Paris Agreement on climate change [8] and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway;[2]

5. *Stresses* the need to strengthen the coordination and coherence of global geospatial information management, in capacity-building, norm-setting, data collection, data dissemination and data sharing, among others, through appropriate coordination mechanisms, including in the broader United Nations system, building on the work of the Committee of Experts;

6. *Acknowledges* the importance of strengthening capacity-building in the area of geospatial information management and relevant statistical integration, especially in developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States;

7. *Decides* to broaden and strengthen the mandate of the Committee of Experts as the relevant body on geospatial information consisting of government experts, in a cost-neutral manner, with any additional costs to the Committee being offset by the cessation of the mandates of the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conferences for Asia and the Pacific and for the Americas;

8. *Also decides* that the formal United Nations regional cartographic conferences are no longer a necessary requirement and, in order to streamline and avoid duplication, that the meetings of the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conferences for Asia and the Pacific and for the Americas shall cease forthwith;

9. *Confirms* the inclusion of the annual session of the Committee of Experts within the regular United Nations calendar of conferences and meetings under the Council, inclusive of the provision of dedicated United Nations conference management services and full support for the annual session of the Committee;

10. *Decides* that the substantive mandates and obligations of the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conferences for Asia and the Pacific and for the Americas shall be assumed by the Committee of Experts at the global level, and their technical and substantive activities at the regional and national levels assumed by the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas, respectively;

[7] General Assembly resolution 70/1.

[8] See FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21, annex.

11. *Requests* that the regional commissions provide relevant support, upon request and as appropriate, to the work of the regional bodies of the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management and that the outcomes and benefits of the activities of those bodies be equally disseminated to all Member States in each region;

12. *Notes* that sustainable funding and support, particularly for the operations of the Committee of Experts that focus on the Sustainable Development Goals, is needed to strengthen and ensure the continued effectiveness of the Committee, and in this regard encourages Member States to provide voluntary contributions, and otherwise requests the Secretary-General to try to mobilize additional resources, including through the means of trust funds and other sources, as appropriate, and encourages Member States to consider expert secondments, to support the activities of the Committee;

13. *Reiterates* the critical importance of the full and effective participation of the countries in special situations in the Committee of Experts in order to ensure a broad and balanced representation at the sessions of the Committee, stresses that adequate resources should be provided, and in this regard encourages Member States to provide voluntary contributions, and otherwise requests the Secretary-General to try to mobilize extrabudgetary resources in order to cover the cost of participation in the Committee for three government representatives from each of the special situation country groupings;

14. *Decides* to change the title of the item on the Council's agenda from "Cartography" to "Geospatial information", and invites thereunder the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names to continue to report on geographical names, and the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management to report on all matters relating to geography, geospatial information and related topics;

15. *Notes* the increasing role and relevance of the Committee of Experts and its acknowledged efforts in streamlining the subsidiary bodies of the Council on geospatial information management matters, and requests that the Committee report back to the Council, no later than in five years' time, on the implementation of the present resolution as well as on its continued efforts to work with the Statistical Commission and with the entire United Nations system, and to integrate geospatial and statistical information systems and, in this context, to examine the strengthening of the institutional arrangements of the Committee.

48th plenary meeting
27 July 2016